

The Foundation at 50: The First Pillar — Vision

“This fiftieth year is sacred—it is a time of freedom and of celebration...”

—Leviticus 25:10



This is my first-ever blog post, and I’m honored I get to talk about a most exciting time in the life of the Foundation and the Church. We are hard at work preparing information about the Foundation that we hope will be interesting and informative to everyone at FUMC. This milestone provides an unprecedented opportunity to celebrate the success of our Founders’ collective vision.

Their inspiration came during the era of Mary Poppins playing at one of the three movie houses downtown on West 7th Street, with Dean Martin loving somebody sometime on television and Texas’s own Lyndon Johnson in the White House. Interspersed with news of the war in Viet Nam, Roy Orbison had the number one hit in September, 1964, but the Beatles dominated the KFJZ and KXOL radio airwaves, and the Fab Four actually played in a live concert in Dallas less than two weeks before six men gathered at a special meeting to form the First Methodist Church of Fort Worth Foundation, Inc.



They were Dr. J. M. Lyle, Mr. V. W. Boswell, Mr. E.E. Sanders, Mr. E. L. Baker, Mr. Raymond Gee and Mr. Clyde A. Penry. These men would become the first directors of the Foundation, officially chartered in Texas. At the time, Dr. Gaston Foote was First Methodist’s Senior Minister; Jon Brelsford was the Church Business Manager; and Lamar Smith was Associate Minister. 1964 was also the year that Fort Worth voters approved a \$16.5 million bond issue to build a convention center in the central downtown business district that was also home to The Fort Worth National Bank of Fort Worth, the depository of the Foundation.

The Foundation’s purpose was to develop and maintain a growing endowment fund to provide the Church with ongoing, enduring financial support through income generated by legacy giving from bequests, generous gifts and honoraria. By early 1965, following an official board meeting, the Foundation received its first three contributions totaling \$ 2500. Within a few years, the Foundation contributed income of \$ 900 to the Church operating budget (1968).

Today, in 2014, with over \$55 million in assets, we are so proud to be able to provide funding to First United Methodist Church averaging over \$2400 per day. The money supports the five “pillars” of the Church: Vision, worship, education, mission and outreach, and music and fine arts. Fittingly, our theme for the 50th celebration season is Five Pillars | Five Decades.

Over the five months leading up to the official Anniversary Celebration scheduled for September 30, 2014, we will share stories of those who give, how the church benefited then and now and where the Foundation is headed in the future. Foundation Sunday is September 28, 2014. There will be a garden gathering hosted by the Foundation's Board of Directors between services that touch on the history, meaning, and contributions of the Foundation and talk about its symbiotic relationship with the Church.



We'll have refreshments, some special entertainment, and time for fellowship. Then, a Festive Celebration Dinner will be held Tuesday, September 30, 2014, exactly 50 years from the actual date of the founding of the Foundation in 1964. Guests from the church community will enjoy a three-course dinner of understated elegance graced with entertaining, joyful presentations, beautiful music, remembrances and commentary, in the Ballroom at the Fort Worth Convention Center. There will be valet parking on site and child care available at the Church. Invitations and ticket information will be mailed in late August.

Won't you share memories of the Foundation with us, too? On the Foundation website event page, you'll find a form to submit your information and stories. Let us know if you have photos from special times at the Church you might like to share, and we will contact you. Also, please ask questions for us to answer in future blog posts. We are so pleased to continue the Foundation's legacy of timeless support for FUMC. Join us. Let's happily reconnect with old friends and make new ones as more and more people learn about the First Methodist Church of Fort Worth Foundation!

— Sid Johnston, Executive Director of FMC Foundation